

# Showcase presentation

## Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia 2015

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### Preparing health profession students for work in inter-professional practice (#195)

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#### Abstract Content (up to 300 words recommended)

**Background/Context:** Health professionals often work using an inter-professional practice model to deliver comprehensive health care to patients. Inter-professional education during undergraduate training is aimed at preparing students for inter-professional practice. However, implementing authentic and high fidelity inter-professional education into the curriculum is challenging.

**Initiative/Practice:** This project reports on the success of a 12-week student-assisted, inter-professional men's health program to develop professional identity and inter-professional practice skills across eight health disciplines. The program included weekly health education and group exercise sessions for thirteen middle-aged, overweight men, facilitated by eighteen students from Dentistry, Exercise Physiology, Medicine, Nursing Science, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Psychology and Speech Pathology. The program was facilitated by an Exercise Physiology senior lecturer and Inter-professional coordinator and took place at a University multi-disciplinary health clinic.

**Methods of evaluative data collection and analysis:** Students completed the Readiness for Inter-Professional learning Scale (RIPLS) questionnaire and a health professions knowledge questionnaire before and after the program. Students also completed paper-based evaluations and participated in focus groups at program completion.

**Evidence of effectiveness:** Students achieved improved understanding of their role as health care professionals and the benefits associated with inter-professional education. Students in the earlier years of their degree achieved a larger change in overall RIPLS score than student who were in their final year of study. Knowledge of the role of different health professions also improved. Students also indicated development of discipline knowledge, communication and advocacy skills, team work, organisational skills, and professionalism as a result of the program. This program provides evidence that a student-assisted, inter-professional men's health program successfully develops professional skills to assist with transition into complex health professional work.

#### Addressing the theme/s of the Conference (up to 200 words recommended)

#### Educating graduates to be responsive and adaptable professionals

This project provided university health profession students with the opportunity to participate in an authentic inter-professional health initiative for at-risk community members. The aim of the project was to give students who are preparing to graduate with a professional health degree, the opportunity to develop and apply their knowledge, skills and attitudes to a real community-based health program. The project required students to combine discipline-specific expertise with inter-professional practice competencies to prepare them for the complex world of inter-professional health practice. Students designed, delivered and participated in the education and group exercise sessions and were required to tailor and adapt the program to the specific needs of the participants, often with little notice, thus the students became educated and skilled at responding and adapting to complex and changing patient needs.